

96 EMILE ZOLA. NOVELIST AND
REFORMER

poor devils whom I might crush on the way. I sought Truth and I acted so badly as to hurt people while trying to reach it. In a word, I have shown cruelty, foolishness, and ignorance, I have been guilty of sacrilege and heresy, because, weary of falsehood and mediocrity, I looked for men in a crowd of eunuchs. And that is why I am condemned."

Such writing as this was bound to ruffle many dovecotes.

There had previously been various efforts on behalf of the new school of painting, the complaints of injustice having led one year to the granting of a Salon des Refusés, but never had any writer hit out so vigorously, with such disregard for the pretentious vanity of the artistic demigods of the hour. If, however, Zola was banished from "L'Éclair" as an art critic, he was not silenced, for he republished his articles in pamphlet form,¹ with a dedicatory preface addressed to Paul Cézanne, in which he said: "I have faith in the views I profess; I know that in a few years everybody will hold me to be right. So I have no fear that they may be cast in my face hereafter." In this again he was fairly accurate: at least several of the views then held to be not merely revolutionary but ridiculous have become commonplaces of criticism.

Though this campaign did not improve Zola's material position, it brought him into notoriety among the public,

and gave him quite a position among the young men of the French art-world. At this time he still had his home in the Rue de Vaugirard, overlooking the Luxembourg gardens, but in the summer of 1866 he was able to spend several weeks at Bennecourt, a little village on the right

¹ "Mon Salon," Paris, Librairie Centrale, 1866, 12mo, 99 pages. The articles are also given in the volume entitled "Mes Haines" (Charpentier and Fasquelle).